

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 1. (cancelled) A purified and isolated DNA molecule consisting essentially of the
2 nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1, or its complementary strand.

1 2. (cancelled) The purified and isolated DNA molecule of Claim 1, wherein said DNA
2 molecule encodes for a purified and isolated protein molecule consisting essentially of the amino
3 acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2.

1 3. (currently amended) A live, attenuated strain of *V. anguillarum* which comprises:

2 a ^{mutated} *mugA* gene comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, ^{wherein said} the strain
3 ^{mutation is located within nts of 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1} characterized in that it is the *mugA* gene being mutated such that the strain is incapable of
4 expressing a functional *mugA* protein.

1 4. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 3 wherein the strain is incapable
2 of growing in salmon intestinal mucus.

1 5. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 3 wherein the mutation is non-
2 revertible.

1 6. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 4 wherein the mutation is an
2 insertion.

1 7. (original) The live, attenuated strain according to claim 4 wherein the mutation is a
2 deletion.

1 8. (currently amended) A vaccine strain against *V.anguillarum* infection in an animal
2 selected from the group consisting of fish, bivalves and crustaceans comprising:

3 a live, attenuated strain of *V.anguillarum*; ~~the strain comprised of a mutated *mugA* gene;~~
4 ~~the strain characterized in that it is incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein which~~
5 comprises a *mugA* gene comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, the *mugA* gene
6 being mutated such that the strain is incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein.

1 9. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the strain further comprises a
2 pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

1 10. (cancelled) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the animal is a fish.

1 11. (cancelled) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the animal is a bivalve.

1 12. (cancelled) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the animal is a crustacean.

1 13. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 8 wherein the mutation is non-revertible.

1 14. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 13 wherein the mutation is an insertion.

1 15. (original) The vaccine strain according to claim 13 wherein the mutation is a deletion.

1 16. (currently amended) A method for immunizing an animal selected from the group
2 consisting of fish, bivalves and crustaceans against *V. anguillarum* infection in ~~an~~ the animal
3 which comprises:

4 administering to the animal a vaccine comprised of a live, attenuated strain of
5 *V.anguillarum*, ~~the strain comprised of a mutated *mugA* gene which comprises a mutated *mugA*~~
6 ~~gene comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, the strain characterized in that it is the~~
7 *mugA* gene being mutated such that the strain is incapable of expressing a functional *mugA*
8 protein.

9 ~~the strain characterized in that it is incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein as a~~
10 ~~result of the mutation in the *mugA* gene.~~

1 17. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises
2 immersion.

1 18. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises
2 intraperitoneal injection.

1 19. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises oral
2 intubation.

1 20. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprises anal
2 intubation.

1 21. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein administering comprising
2 immersing the animal in a medium containing the attenuated strain.

1 22. (canceled) The method according to claim 16 wherein the animal is a fish.

1 23. (canceled) The method according to claim 16 wherein the animal is a bivalve.

1 24. (canceled) The method according to claim 16 wherein the animal is a crustacean.

1 25. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein the mutation in the *mugA* gene is
2 non-revertible.

1 26. (original) The method according to claim 25 wherein the mutation in the *mugA* gene is
2 an insertion.

1 27. (original) The method according to claim 25 wherein the mutation in the *mugA* gene is a
2 deletion.

1 28. (currently amended) A method of inducing an immune response in an animal selected
2 from the group consisting of fish, bivalves and crustaceans against one or more pathogens which
3 comprises transforming a live, attenuated strain of *V. anguillarum* which comprises a *mugA* gene
4 comprising nucleotides 1218-2610 of SEQ ID NO:1, the *mugA* gene being mutated such that the
5 strain is incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein, the strain characterized in that it is
6 incapable of expressing a functional *mugA* protein, with a plasmid comprising DNA of interest
7 encoding at least one protein antigen for each of the pathogens and administering the
8 transformed strain to ~~an~~ the animal.

1 29. (canceled) A method for the detection of the presence of *V. anguillarum* in animal tissue
2 or fluids comprising:

3 contacting the sample with a detectably labeled DNA probe wherein the probe comprises
4 a detectable single-stranded DNA having a nucleotide sequence which specifically and

5 selectively hybridizes with DNA of *V. anguillarum*, the DNA probe comprising a nucleotide
6 sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO. 1, whereby the presence of the
7 DNA is indicative of a *V. anguillarum* infection.

1 30. (new) A mutated strain of *V. anguillarum* characterized in that the strain is incapable of
2 growing in salmon intestinal mucous.

Not
necessary
due to a
mutator
SD